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ABSTRACT

In order to promote voluntary integration in two high schools and a middle school, the Fort Worth Independent School District in Texas developed a magnet program that offers specialized curricula: engineering at the all black Dunbar High School, finance at the predominantly black Polytechnic High School, and communications at Dunbar Middle School. This report presents evaluation results for the first two years of the program (1981-82 and 1982-83). The evaluation investigated program admission criteria, changes in school racial composition, participant characteristics, student achievement, program curricula, and attitudes of teachers, students, and parents toward the program. Findings indicated that: (1) the quality of students admitted to the program improved between 1981-82 and 1982-83; (2) the schools' racial balance shifted from predominantly black to racial ratios that more closely resemble the district ratio; and (3) progress in achieving academic test score gains has been slow, but achievement levels are rising. The report includes several tables of data on student characteristics and achievement, and presents results of interviews with teachers, parents, and students involved in the program. (MJL)

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A TEXAS MAGNET PROGRAM: 1981-1983 EVALUATION MATERIALS AND RESULTS

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This package contains evaluation materials and results for the first two years of a middle and high school magnet program in the Fort Worth Independent School District. The program, developed to promote voluntary integration of two black high schools and a middle school, consisted of an engineering high school curriculum, a finance high school curriculum, and a communications middle school (grades 7-8). From its first year it succeeded in attracting students from almost all schools of the city and achieved racial balance within the magnet classes. Applicants, who were recruited through information sessions in all middle and high schools, were required to take the Differential Aptitude Test. The results, along with Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores, were used to select students for engineering and finance programs. In the two black high schools, where the program was located, neighborhood students who applied were offered remedial mathematics prior to selection so that they would be able to compete with other applicants.

The middle school program during the first year was a pilot project designed for the neighborhood students of the school to be integrated and was offered to all middle school students of the district in its second year. Student selection was made mainly on basis of the ITBS and teacher recommendations. The Development Cognitive Abilities Test became an additional screening instrument of middle school students for use in 1983-84.

The number and academic caliber of both applicants and students increased from the first to the second year of operation. Although some students who had received more than one "D" in two consecutive semesters were asked to leave; dropouts and racially related problems were very few. Following the positive experience of the first two years, the district made plans to expand the program to other schools.

The materials in this package contain short program descriptions, questionnaires administered to students and parents, an interview with magnet teachers at the beginning of the program, and magnet evaluation reports outlining student performance on the ITBS in comparison with applicants who were invited but did not attend.

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MAGNET PROGRAM EVALUATION - ITS CONTEXT AND INPUT

Helen Abadzi

The magnet program of the Ft. Worth Independent School District has started it's first year of implementation after careful planning during the preceding academic year. Modeled in part after a program of the Houston I.S.D., the magnet program is expected to deliver high quality education at the high school level along with integration of the city's one heavily and one completely black school.

The project arose from the need to adhere to court mandates in integrating schools. Dunbar High School, an all black school, and Polytechnic, a 95% black school proved difficult to integrate through busing since the communities wanted to keep populations to their home school. In addition academic achievement in these two schools was the lowest in the district. In response to these two needs, a program was envisioned which would address both issues by creating high quality nuclei in which students from all over the district would like to attend and which would bring about voluntary integration. After a year of careful planning, the programs started functioning in the academic year 1981-82.

Specifically, the magnet project offers an engineering program at the all black Dunbar high school and a finance project at the predominantly black Polytechnic high school. The program also includes a fledgling communications magnet program at Dunbar middle school with no present attempt at integration.

The high school program started by admitting students both at the ninth and tenth grade level and offering them specialized curricula (see process evaluation report). Interested applicants were given the Differential Aptitude Test (D.A.T.) and were screened on the basis of their scores. The D.A.T. was selected as a screening instrument because it assesses abstract

reasoning, spatial perception, mathematical reasoning, and other aptitudes considered necessary for success in engineering and finance. The test was also found to be a reliable predictor of success for the Houston I.S.D. program.

Brainstorming with the program counselors in June 1981 produced the following set of goals for the program,

a) The program should promote desegregation by bringing together a racially balanced student body. More than 90% minority student participation will indicate failure in this respect.

b) The students should show considerable academic growth while they are in the program, growth that will enable them to compete successfully with other engineering and business students in college. Short-term evidence of the latter goal will be a significant increase in achievement in the following areas:

communication skills
mathematics
science

c) It is expected that students will find the program interesting and challenging, and will therefore be motivated to study harder and perform. Interest and willingness to work hard is crucial if the program is to achieve goal b). Short-term evidence will show significant changes in the following areas:

hours of study at home
program drop-out rate
school attendance
attitudes toward self
attitudes toward school.

d) Long-term effects of the programs will be assessed after graduation of the first batch of students.

These goals are relatively broad, but more specific goals will be set as data from the first year of operation become available.

Decisions to be made about the programs involve the curriculum, the number of students to be served, the teaching methods used, the screening process of teachers and students, and the content of other activities such as field trips and counseling sessions. The locations of the programs and their specialized functions cannot be changed, since the project was developed as

an alternative to forced busing. It will be very important to achieve a relatively balanced racial ratio, approximately 55-60% black, in the future. Most of the evaluation feedback will be needed by the end of the academic year 1981-82 so that modifications in goals can be made for the upcoming year. Some information, such as teacher perceptions, was needed during the course of the year where its firdings would be applicable.

The two progress reports included describe the programs during the first few months of their inception. Some self-concept, attitude, and academic pre and post test measures have been collected and others are in progress. Also, the predictive validity of D.A.T. scores will be studied as more data are gathered on student performance.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
MAGNET PROGRAM
EVALUATION

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET PROGRAM EVALUATION

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE MAGNET PROGRAM?

The magnet program at the high school level is operating since its inception year, 1981-82, at two schools: Dunbar High School, with emphasis on engineering, and Polytechnic High School, with emphasis on finance. The middle school magnet program, full-fledged for the first year in 1981-82, is located at Dunbar Middle School (#153) and placed emphasis on communications.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF THE MAGNET PROGRAM EVALUATION?

Neighborhood Black students attending the Dunbar Middle School Magnet Program in its first year of operation showed a month's gain per month of instruction of the ITBS and scored above test norms. In its second year of operation the program shifted to an ethnic ratio of 40% Black and 57% Anglo.

The high school level quality students were admitted into the program who scored well above test norms. Test scores of admitted students were higher in the second year of operation. The ethnic ratio shifted from 73% Black, 18% Anglo in the first year of operation to 59% Black and 30% Anglo in the second.

Student academic caliber is higher in the second year of operation as compared to students admitted in the first year. Whereas some of the highest-scoring applicants finally chose to stay at their home schools during the first year of operation (1981-82), most high-scoring students invited did attend in 1982-83.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MAGNET PROGRAM

WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROGRAM?

Students should score near, at, or above the 77th percentile on ITBS in 1982-83 to be eligible to attend. Special cases are also considered and qualifications are evaluated in a global manner. The program goal is to find students with academic potential.

In 1981-82, 77 high scoring students, all black, attended; 23 in the 6th grade, 25 in the 7th grade, and 29 in the 8th grade. Of the 48 6th and 7th graders, the 18 strongest academically were invited to remain in the program during the academic year 1982-83. The rest were encouraged to return to the greater program where honors courses were available.

The number of applicants invited in 1982-83 was 139, of which 124 accepted and registered. Two withdrew early in the academic year. Table 3 shows the schools from which students came to Dunbar Middle School.

WHAT IS THE ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE DUNBAR MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM?

In 1981-82, all students were black neighborhood residents. In 1982-83, 3% were Hispanic, 40% were Black, and 57% were Anglo. Fifty-two percent of the students were males.

WHAT WAS THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MAGNET STUDENTS DURING 1981-82?

The students who were in the program when it was in its pilot stage (1981-82) operated at or above grade level in all subjects but math, in which they were 2-3 months below (see Table 4). Their 1981-82 spring performance was a year to fourteen months above district norms for all three grades and approximately two years above Dunbar Middle School norms for each grade level. Group gains from 1981 to 1982 ranged from 7 months to a year and three months.

These students were above test norms when they entered the program (see Table 4) and they continued to gain approximately one month per month of instruction in spite of declining gains characteristic at that age group.

WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC STATUS OF DUNBAR MIDDLE MAGNET STUDENTS UPON ENTRANCE TO THE PROGRAM IN 1982-83?

Students who entered the program in its second year of operation scored 2 to 14 months above national norms in the 7th grade and a year to 19 months above national norms in the 8th grade (see Table 5). Seventh grade student score breakdowns show little variability in scores of the three ethnic groups. Eighth grade students are more dissimilar. Anglo students score approximately a year above blacks.

HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET PROGRAM

WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM?

Applicants are screened on the basis of the Differential Aptitude Test, past scholastic performance, teacher recommendations, and student interest as evidenced by an essay.

WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION STATISTICS FOR 1982-83?

A total of 110 students were invited to attend the 9th grade of Dunbar High School, of which 57 registered. Eighty-seven students were invited to attend the 9th grade of Poly High School and 59 registered. Soon after classes began, four students dropped out of Dunbar High School and two students dropped out of Poly High School.

WHAT IS THE ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM?

The ethnic make-up (Table 6) of the high school magnet program is 11% Hispanic, 59% Black, and 30% Anglo. This percentage represents a considerable shift from the large number of Black students (73%) admitted in 1981-82 to a more even distribution, approximating the district ethnic distribution.

WHAT WAS THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET STUDENTS FROM 1981 TO 1982?

Students who were admitted in the 9th grade to the magnet program had 8th grade spring ITBS scores and were given the TAP in the spring of 1982. Table 9 shows 1981 and 1982 results for these students. Since these are two different tests, gains from one year to the next are listed for comparison purposes only and are not to be taken as months of gain per month of instruction. Dunbar students outperformed Poly students both in 1981 and in 1982. Poly students showed gains lower by two to four months, eight months in the study skills area. Test scores for both schools, however, are well above district and national norms.

Some students had been invited to the program but did not attend. The scores for these students are listed for comparison purposes. They are higher than magnet scores, and it can be construed that some very good students declined the invitation to the program.

Students who were admitted in the 10th grade had not been tested in the 9th grade and no comparisons could be made from year to year. Table 10 shows TAP scores for these students at the end of the 10th grade along with test scores for

students who were invited but did not attend. As in the case of the 9th graders, 10th grade Dunbar students outperformed Poly students. Students who were invited but did not attend outperformed magnet students by a year in most subtests. It seems that the better students tended to stay in their home schools, though they initially showed interest.

WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC STATUS OF HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET STUDENTS UPON ENTRANCE TO THE PROGRAM IN 1982-83?

Almost all students admitted were 9th graders with 8th grade ITBS scores available. Table 8 shows test scores for students admitted at Dunbar and Poly magnet programs along with test scores of students who were invited but did not register as in 1981-82. The latter scores are very similar to the scores of magnet students. Entering students scored approximately one year above national norms. Poly and Dunbar magnet students' 8th grade 1981-82 scores are very similar. This indicates that Poly students are rising in academic achievement, and the better students who had decided not to enter the program in 1981-82 are now attracted to it.

CONCLUSIONS?

The magnet programs, both at the middle and at the high school level have admitted high quality students and have been slow to achieve superior academic gains in test scores.

Comparisons with students who were invited in the program but did not attend show that during the first year the program was in operation there was a tendency for some very good students to decline the invitations. The similarities in test scores during the second year of its operation however, show that the better students do attend the program now.

The quality of the students admitted has improved as it can be seen if tables 8 and 9 are compared. Whereas in 1981 the 8th grade ITBS composite was 9.8 for Dunbar High School and 9.3 for Poly, 8th grade test scores for students admitted in the fall of 1982 were 10.2 and 10.2 respectively. The racial balance of both schools has shifted from predominantly Black in 1981-82 to an ethnic ratio that more closely resembles the district ratio.

Quality education is being delivered in these schools and voluntary integration is taking place along with several indications that the achievement levels of students attending the program is rising.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET PROGRAMS
EVALUATION AND STATUS

WHAT DOES 'MAGNET' MEAN?

A magnet school attracts students because a special program is offered that students want to attend. If a magnet school is located in a predominantly minority area, then majority students from more affluent areas are attracted to it and voluntary school integration is achieved along with the delivery of quality education to residents and attracted students alike.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE MAGNET PROGRAM IN THE DISTRICT?

A high school level magnet program has been in operation since 1981-82, located in two predominantly black schools. The program at Dunbar High School places emphasis on engineering while the one at Polytechnic High School emphasizes finance. Students from almost all middle and high schools of the city are attending these programs. A middle school level 7th and 8th grade magnet program is located at the Dunbar Middle School (#168) and emphasizes communications. It operated as a pilot program during 1981-82 with Dunbar school residents only and was launched as a full-fledged magnet program in 1982-83 when a new building was acquired, the 7th and 8tn grade Dunbar Middle School. Currently both programs have completed a year of operation and have started a second.

Table 1. Dunbar Middle School 1982-83

Invited, not registered	15
Registered	124
Registered, then withdrew	2

Table 2. 1982-83 Magnet Middle School
Students by grade and ethnicity

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total	%
Hispanic	4	0	4	3%
Black	35	14	49	40%
Anglo/Oriental	60	10	70	57%
			Total	123

Table 3. Schools from which Middle School Magnet students came in 1982-83

#152	Rosemont	1
#154	William James	31
#157	J. P. Elder	1
#159	William Mannig	1
#160	Forest Oak	9
#161	Morningside	30
#162	Wedgwood	1
#163	Handley	1
#164	Dunbar	18
#166	Glencrest	25

Table 4. 1981-82 Middle School Magnet Students Test Scores and Gains In Grade Equivalents

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Vocabulary '81	6.3	7.2	8.2
Vocabulary '82	7.3	8.1	8.9
Gain	1.0	.9	.7
Dunbar 1982 Norms	4.8	5.7	6.3
Reading '81	6.8	7.4	8.6
Reading '82	7.5	8.3	9.4
Gain	.7	.9	.8
Dunbar 1982 Norms	5.0	5.9	6.9
Language '81	7.3	8.1	9.3
Language '82	8.1	9.2	10.3
Gain	.7	1.1	1.0
Dunbar 1982 Norms	5.4	6.8	7.3
Study Skills '81	6.9	7.6	8.3
Study Skills '82	7.9	8.6	9.7
Gain	1.0	1.0	1.4
Dunbar 1982 Norms	5.5	6.2	6.6
Math '81	6.8	7.6	8.6
Math '82	7.8	8.5	9.7
Gain	1.0	.9	1.1
Dunbar 1982 Norms	5.4	6.4	7.4
Composite '81	6.8	7.6	8.6
Composite '82	7.7	8.6	9.6
Gain	.9	1.0	1.0
Dunbar 1982 Norms	5.3	6.3	7.0
District	6.4	7.2	8.1

Table 5. 1981 ITBS Scores for 1982-83
Middle School Magnet Students

	Grade 7				Grade 8			
	Mexican	Black	Anglo	Total	Mexican	Black	Anglo	Total
Vocabulary	8.6	8.0	8.5	8.3	--	8.7	10.0	9.0
Reading	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.7	--	9.0	10.4	9.4
Language	9.2	9.0	9.3	9.2	--	9.6	10.9	9.9
Study Skills	8.4	8.4	8.8	8.7	--	9.0	10.0	9.1
Math	8.7	8.2	8.4	8.4	--	8.7	9.5	8.9
Composite	8.6	8.5	8.8	8.6	--	9.0	10.2	9.3
Social Studies	7.5	8.6	8.8	8.7	--	8.9	10.2	9.1
Science	8.0	9.0	9.8	9.4	--	9.3	11.1	9.7
	N=3	N=34	N=56	N=93	N=0	N=13	N=8	N=21

Table 6. Ethnic Make-Up of Magnet High School Students

	Students admitted 1981-82						School Magnet Population 1982-83					
	Dunbar		Poly		Total		Dunbar		Poly		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hispanic	8	9	2	3	10	6	16	12	12	10	28	11
Black	63	70	45	76	108	73	89	64	65	54	154	59
Anglo	15	17	12	20	27	18	34	24	44	36	78	30
	N = 88		59		147		N = 139		121		260	

Table 7. Magnet High School
Admission Statistics, 1982-83

	Dunbar	Poly
Invited, not registered	53	28
Registered	53	57
Registered, then withdrew	4	2

Table 8. 8th grade ITBS scores for 9th grade students admitted in 1982-83.

	Dunbar	Poly	Invited students
Reading	10.0	10.3	10.2
Language	10.8	10.8	10.6
Study skills	10.2	10.3	10.3
Math	9.9	9.7	9.8
Composite	10.2	10.2	10.1
Social studies	9.9	10.3	10.3
Science	10.1	10.3	10.3
	N = 52	N = 57	N = 76

Table 8. 8th grade ITBS scores for 9th grade students admitted in 1982-83.

	Dunbar	Poly	Invited students
Reading	10.0	10.3	10.2
Language	10.8	10.8	10.6
Study skills	10.2	10.3	10.3
Math	9.9	9.7	9.8
Composite	10.2	10.2	10.1
Social studies	9.9	10.3	10.3
Science	10.1	10.3	10.1
	N = 52	N = 57	N = 76

Table 9. Comparison between 1981 8th grade ITBS scores and 1982 9th grade scores.

	Grade 9			Grade 9
	Dunbar	Poly	National	Invited Students*
Reading				
1981 (8th)	9.7	9.3	8.8	9.9
1982 (9th)	11.6	11.0	9.8	12.4
Gains	1.9	1.7	1.0	2.5
Language				
1981	10.4	10.2	8.8	10.9
1982	12.2	11.8	9.8	11.9
Gains	1.8	1.6	1.0	1.0
Math				
1981	9.4	9.0	8.8	9.9
1982	11.9	10.7	9.8	11.6
Gains	2.5	1.7	1.0	1.7
Study Skills				
1981	9.8	9.1	8.8	10.1
1982	12.6	11.0	9.8	13.0
Gains	2.8	1.9	1.0	2.9
Composite				
1981 (ITBS 8th)	9.8	9.3	8.8	10.2
1982 (TAPS 9th)	12.0	10.9	9.8	11.6
Gains	2.2	1.6	1.0	1.4
Social Studies				
1981	9.5	8.6	8.8	9.5
1982	11.4	10.7	9.8	12.0
Gains	1.9	2.1	1.0	2.5
Science				
1981	10.4	8.8	8.8	9.5
1982	12.0	10.4	9.8	11.8
Gains	1.6	1.6	1.0	2.3
	N = 30	N = 29		N = 18

* Applied, invited, but did not register

Only students still in attendance in 1982-83 are included in this table.

Table 10. 1982 TAP Scores for Students Admitted in 1981-82

	Grade 10		
	Dunbar	Poly	Students Invited
Reading	11.7	10.9	13.6
Language	12.2	11.8	14.2
Study Skills	13.4	13.0	14.5
Math	13.6	13.1	14.3
Composite	12.9	12.5	13.8
Social Studies	12.8	11.5	13.2
Science	12.6	11.7	13.1
	N = 34	N = 14	N = 21

This table includes only the students who continued to be at the magnet program during the second year of its operation.

THE MAGNET PROGRAM

PROCESS EVALUATION REPORT, NOVEMBER, 1981

Helen Abadzi

1981-82 is the first year of the Magnet Program in operation. After more than a year of careful planning, it opened its doors with two regular programs and a pilot, serving 147 freshmen and sophomores and 76 middle school students.

The program is expected to offer high-quality specialized education and at the same time voluntarily integrate two inadequately integrated high schools. Evaluation has been considered an important aspect of the program, and for this reason the program is monitored closely. The first evaluation report (October, 1981) assessed magnet teacher opinions and impressions regarding the program. The current report will present descriptive statistics and other information related to teachers and students characteristics.

Who was admitted and from where

Racial and sex breakdowns show a rather integrated set of classes. Specifically the breakdown is as follows.

Table 1

School	Sex	Mexican American		Black		White		Oriental		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dunbar	Male	6	6	25	28	13	15	1	1	45	51
	Female	2	2	38	43	2	2	1	1	43	49
		8	9	63	71	15	17	2	2	88	
Poly	Male	1	1	32	54	7	12	0		40	68
	Female	1	1	13	22	5	8	0		19	32
		2	3	45	76	12	20	0		59	

Females account for half the population at Dunbar, and most are black, Dunbar being their home school. The number of white females in both programs is unusually low, possibly because attending school in the run-down neighborhoods of the city was a determent. Blacks account for three fourths of the population in both schools. Most are students attending their home school, (see Table 2) although many are bused. The engineering program was in higher demand among students than finance and it seems that the best students went there (also see Table 5). Fifteen students from Dunbar middle school who could not enter the engineering program but were otherwise eligible chose to get bused at Poly.

Table 2 shows that students of both programs came from all over the city. There were larger number of students attending their home school both as 10th graders and as 9th graders coming from feeder middle schools.

Attempts to assess the socioeconomic status of magnet students through the free lunch program were not very successful because these data are not readily accessible. Also many students who qualify choose not to participate.

Applicant statistics

Even in the first year of the program competition was stiff, particularly for the engineering school. Students were tested last spring with the DAT and stated their program preferences. Then the coordinators went through the results initially choosing the highest scoring students and then selective lower-scoring students until about 100 students in Dunbar and 80 in Poly were selected. Cutoff scores below which very few if any students were accepted were the 60%ile in abstract reasoning, and the 50%ile in most other areas.

Table 2: Schools attended last year by magnet students (1980-81)

		Dunbar	Poly	Both Programs
#151	Mclean	1	2	3
#152	Rosemont	2	0	2
#153	Daggett	1	2	3
#155	Meadowbrook	5	1	6
#156	Stripling	1	3	4
#157	Elder	2	0	2
#158	Riverside	2	1	3
#159	Monnig	1	0	1
#160	Forest Oak	6	7	13
#162	Wedgwood	2	3	5
#163	Handley	4	2	6
#164	Dunbar	18	15	33
#165	Meacham	0	2	2
#167	Leonard	1	1	2
#260	Southwest	1	2	3
#261	Paschal	2	2	4
#262	North Side	2	1	3
#263	Polytechnic	0	9	9
#264	Carter-Riverside	2	0	2
#265	Diamond Hill-Jarvis	2	0	2
#266	Arlington Heights	1	2	3
#268	Western Hills	2	0	2
#269	Trimble Tech	2	1	3
#270	Wyatt	6	2	8
#274	Dunbar	20	0	20
#374	Ruby Williamson	1	0	1
Private, Out-of-town		1	1	1

Some, such as clerical speed were of no importance. Borderline students who had teacher recommendations or special characteristics that made them appear promising in spite of mediocre scores were admitted on probation. Table 3 shows summary admission statistics of applicants.

Table 3

School	# Tested*	Invited	Registered	Now On Probation	Present Enrollment	Dropped
Dunbar	204	114	90	15	88	3**
Poly	108	73	62	36	59	3

*numbers overlap
**one student was retested and admitted after school started

The ratio of applicants to students admitted was 56% for Dunbar and 65% for Poly. Most students admitted did register, though some chose to stay with friends in their home schools. This was the most widely cited reason for not enrolling. In a few occasions students moved out of town during the summer. When applicants did not show up other students on a waiting list were notified.

Students placed on probation are carefully watched. All 12 of Dunbars students and all but one of Poly's are black. At Poly students making one or more D's during the first six weeks are also placed on probation. Students who initially were on probation at Dunbar and performed well in the first six weeks were removed from the list. Each program has two students in serious academic trouble at this point.

Withdrawals thus far have been few. Two Dunbar students were dropped for disciplinary and academic reasons. The rest have chosen to go back to their home schools, sunce social life in the magnet program has been limited.

The program this year admitted both 9th and 10th graders. Freshmen outnumbered sophomores. Also, a few non-magnet students, from the home schools,

mostly upperclassmen, were allowed to take magnet courses. Table 4 shows these numbers.

Table 4

School	Freshmen	Sophomores	Non-Magnet
Dunbar	47	41	6
Poly	40	19	6

Magnet courses indemand by non-magnet students are computer science, engineering, graphics, chemistry, introduction to finance. At Poly scheduling problems necessitated the placement of a few non-magnet students in the English class.

Academic standing of magnet students

Grades are reported every six weeks, and the first report was sent out. Averaging grades at this point was too laborious a procedure to ask of the staff so grades were described in general terms instead.

At Dunbar four students made the A honor roll (two blacks, one white, one oriental) and 13 made the B honor roll (three whites, nine blacks, one Mexican). Twelve students had one or more D's. Grades varied around C. At Poly students seemed to have slightly better grades, B's and C's.

ITBS scores offer a picture of student performance prior to the inception of the magnet program. Freshmen took the ITBS as 8th graders in the spring of 1981. Sophomores did not take a standardized test as freshmen. In order to give a picture of their academic performance, albeit vague, their fall 1979, 8th grade percentile scores are shown here.

Table 5 : Average Standardized Test Scores of Magnet Students

School	Grade	Reading %ile	Language %ile	Math %ile	Composite %ile
Dunbar	9	40	44	66	71
	10	32	49	62	66
Poly	9	38	50	56	66
	10	30	55	60	65
DISTRICT (8th Grade, Spring '81)	9	43	46	40	42
DISTRICT (8th Grade, Fall, 1979)	10	37	39	35	37

It can be seen that for both grades and programs magnet students are below average in reading, though not much. Frequency distributions show considerable numbers of students in the first three stanines (see Table 8), such as 42-45% of Dunbar and Poly 9th grade students. Magnet group scores are in most cases above the mean in language, and frequency distributions show again a wide spread. In mathematics however, scores are considerably above the mean and scores are concentrated at the narrow end. Composite scores, which reflect general performance, are much above average. It must be concluded that Magnet students excel in quantitative skills, but some still have inadequate reading scores.

Transportation

Students living more than two miles away ride the bus. There are eight routes shared between Poly and Dunbar. Transportation has not been easy. Students get stranded, delayed, and one dropped out of the program because of these problems.

Remediation prior to the program

At the end of last academic year interested students at the two home schools were asked to take a remedial math course either before or after school. They were warned that course attendance would not guarantee entrance.

The courses, taught by teachers now in the magnet program, lasted 8-9 weeks. The initial plan was to teach algebra but they ended up teaching more "number sense", fractions, and other arithmetic concepts students were weak on. In Dunbar a diagnostic test was administered to students. In neither school was there an official post-test, but students stated to the teachers that the course helped them. Almost all students who are now in the program attended remedial math to some extent. One of the teachers mentioned that the students now lagging behind tend to be the ones who attended little of the remedial math course.

Magnet courses taught

The curricula were developed last year and were approved by T.E.A. Freshmen and sophomores take slightly different courses (see Table 6).

According to T.E.A. guidelines now courses have to be evaluated. Most of the courses taught this year were not considered entirely new in Texas and do not have to be evaluated. Only one, financial enrichment studies, will have to be. Since there are no criterion referenced tests for these courses, it will be evaluated through teacher made tests, questionnaires, and evidence of curriculum taught. The necessary steps have already been made for that by the finance program coordinator.

Criterion-referenced pre-tests were administered in grammar and algebra. A self-concept scale was administered to all students. Results will be reported after post-tests are administered.

Table 6: Fall Semester Curricula

	Poly	Dunbar
Ninth Grade	English	English
	Algebra or Geometry	Algebra or Geometry
	General Physical Science or Biology	Biology
	Health	Elective (often foreign lang.)
	Physical Education	P.E., ROTC, band or Health
	Typing	Typing
	Computer Science 1	Engineering lab or Graphics
	Introduction to finance	
	Finance enrichment studies or elective	
Tenth Grade	English	English
	Geometry or Algegra 3-4	Geometry or Algebra 3-4
	Biology or Chemistry	Biology or Chemistry
	World History	World History
	Physical Education	P. E., ROTC, Band
	Computer Science 1	Computer Science 1
	Accounting	Engineering lab or Graphics
	Law or Elective	Elective (often foreign lang.)

Teacher credentials

Magnet teachers are highly competent, experienced and dedicated. Following is a summary of their degrees and years of experience.

Table 7:

School	Teacher	Position	Highest Degree	Field	Experience
Poly	Linda Cook	Coordinator			
	DeLois Smith	Counselor	M.S.	Counseling	14 years
	Margo Clark	English	M.S.		13 years
	Jack Curtis	Finance	M.S.	Industrial Management	0
	Olivia McCartney	Math	B.S.	Math	12 years
	Chuck Tielding	Science			11 years
Dunbar	Winnie Taylor	Coordinator	M.S. B.A.	Ed. Adm. Math	13 years
	Catherine Edwards	Counselor	B.A. M.E.	Music Counselling	35 years
	Gary Hicks	Computer Science	M.S.	Math	18 years
	Mildred Sims	Math	M.S.	Math Ed.	12 years
	Linda Mitchell	Science	M.S.	Biology	10 years
	Pat Martin	English	B.A.	History, English	8 years
	Chris Young	Engineering	B.S.	Psychology	6 years

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered show that the programs are well organized and have had relatively few problems. Dropout rate is low, students seem motivated, and staff members are pleased.

The Dunbar Middle School Magnet Program

This is a pilot program whose aim is to provide challenging education to the Dunbar Middle students who are high on reasoning ability. This year the program has tried to bring to Dunbar students from its feeder schools who were eligible to go to the other buildings offering the vanguard/magnet programs.

There were no entrance tests for the program; students were identified on the basis of teacher recommendations. There are 76 students, grades 6 through 8, all black of which 37 are female and 39 are male. Their average composite ITBS score for spring 1981 is the 70th percentile. Of the 76 students thirteen are on the free lunch program. There have been no dropouts thus far, since the program is not competitive and long distance busing is not involved.

The program has two full-time teachers and a coordinator. It stresses science, computer science, and communication. So, in addition to their 7th and 8th grade curriculum students take communication workshop and studio production (gr. 7 & 8) and computer enrichment lab (gr. 7 & 8). Sixth graders this year are taking the regular 6th grade curriculum. Gloria Enis, the coordinator has a B.F.A. degree and 19 years of experience. Rozella Szabo, science teacher has a B.S. in elementary education and 10 years of experience. Terry Buchner has a B.A. in journalism and one year of experience.

It is too early to evaluate this program in a very meaningful way. But students, parents, teachers, and administrators of Dunbar Middle School are very enthusiastic about it. The students seem captivated by the communications course, which explains at this point what T.V. commercials really say to them and the studio production lab where they are building their own simple cameras. They love the computer and many stay late or come early in the morning in order to work on it.

October 27, 1981

INTERVIEWS WITH MAGNET TEACHERS

AT POLY AND DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOLS

By Helen Abadzi

Interview sessions with the magnet teachers of Poly and Dunbar High Schools were held as a part of process evaluation for the program. The interviews were partly structured in that specific questions were asked and issues arising were further elaborated on as necessary. Coordinators were not present and most teachers were interviewed as a group. At Poly High School the teachers interviewed were: Margo Clark, English; Chuck Fielding, science; Olivia McCartney, math; Jack Curtis, business; DeLois Smith, counselor. Question and answers are briefly summarized below.

1) In what ways has the program affected participants?

The idea of a "special program" helps. Students are more willing to accept assignments though they still do not want to work that hard. Students are better desciplined, and classes are more manageable.

2) In what ways has the program affected non-participants?

No comments have been heard from them. They are aware of it, and sometimes are curious about it. Some non-magnet students, mostly older, take magnet courses such as chemistry or computer science.

3) Were student selection procedures fair and appropriate?

Mostly yes. One or two students should not have been admitted. The DAT has been a helpful instrument and will become more so when data from each year are accumulated. Maybe the program should be more selective.

Of the students three have dropped out. One moved and two went back to their home schools for social reasons.

4) Were teacher selection procedures fair and appropriate?

Yes. Most positions had two to five applicants this year, since the outcomes of the program were uncertain and they did not want to risk a good position. The present teachers had been asked to apply. All said they were pleased with their decision. There seem to be no structured criteria for teacher selection at this point, though the best teachers are sought.

5) What are the reactions of non-magnet teachers to the program thus far?

Teachers have mostly not reacted. A few have made negative statements of some type, but they were viewed as people who would make negative statements about any new program. Two Dunbar teachers said that magnet students were pampered, the campus monitor said that they were privileged. One teacher was under the impression

that magnet classes alone were air-conditioned. Some teachers may be envious of smaller classes, discipline, and student success. Actually negative comments were more last year; but overall, magnet teachers at Poly think that non-magnet teachers have not created any problems. One opinion heard was that the program will not do much for Poly students per se.

6) Are physical space arrangements satisfactory?

To some extent classrooms are okay,but science equipment has not arrived yet, and the labs, as is the case with many older schools, are not appropriately built. Most important, the magnet office is housed in one room, where neither the coordinator nor the counselor can talk in private.

7) Are administrative arrangements (scheduling, teacher loads, compensation) satisfactory?

Being a magnet teacher is a lot of work. They get paid extra for two weeks longer, but they all do extra work at night as well as activities such as retreats. But they were expecting it, and it does not seem to bother them.

8) Are the existing procedures of the program fair?

It is too early to tell, but probably yes. Students who make D's at the end of six weeks are watched closely and conferences are arranged with the parents. Much help is given to the students.

9) Does the program help promote racial integration?

Thus far yes. Students have been quietly accepted on campus. Some participate in athletics and band. Friendships are being formed between minority students. Tenth graders seem to be better at it than ninth graders. No problems have developed thus far.

10) What are the general opinions and impressions about the program?

Definitely positive. Overall the program is successful and minor problems such as those mentioned above, will be taken care of with time. Teachers expect the program to become even more successful in the future.

At Dunbar High School, the teachers interviewed as a group were Linda Mitchell, science; Pat Martin, English; Mildred Simms, mathematics; Catherine Edwards, counselor. Gary Hicks, computer science; and Chris Young, engineering; were interviewed separately because of schedule conflicts. Questions and answers are briefly summarized below.

1) In what ways has the program affected participants?

The students are very enthusiastic. The program has motivated those who make good grades without being challenged. And they compete with each other. No negative effects of the program have been seen but students in English make B's and C's, lower

than expected. Teachers find them noisy and undisciplined, and they produce work inferior to their abilities.

2) In what ways has the program affected non-participants?

There is some pride in the school with regard to the program. Teachers think that non-magnet students' achievement may be increasing because of the program. Previous Dunbar students now in the program, hold school offices. Six non-magnet students attend chemistry, graphic arts and computer science classes.

3) Were student selection procedures fair and appropriate?

Yes, no problems arose.

4) Were teacher selection procedures fair and appropriate?

Teachers feel that they were recruited and asked to volunteer. Not many applied, there were 15 applicants for the various positions. Job descriptions were sent out, and teachers were employed according to them.

5) What are the reactions of the non-magnet teachers to the program thus far?

Two or three teachers and an administrator have made negative comments on occasion, partly because magnet teachers do not attend faculty meetings and are exempted from hall duty. The magnet teachers commented that a) the ones who complained seem to be the least concerned about their own duties, b) they had negative views last year about the program, and c) some negativism always existed in Dunbar. They do not think that the situation is serious, or that there even is a problem.

6) Are physical space arrangements satisfactory?

Generally yes. Teachers would like all magnet classes to be in the same wing of the building. The engineering lab has had long delays in acquisition of equipment due to ordering irregularities. Repairs in the building moved the engineering lab out of its class and disrupted its schedule.

7) Are adminsitrative arrangements satisfactory?

Teachers knew it would be hard work, and they were prepared for it. They are all sponsoring clubs, but some feel that clubs have been arbitrarily assigned. They spend a lot of time each week on work-related activities, such as retreats and field-trips.

8) Are the exiting procedures of the program fair?

Exiting procedures have been considered appropriate. At this point two students are on probation for academic reasons, and teachers are closely working with them.

9) Does the program help promote racial integration?

It has thus far on a limited basis. Inter-racial friendships are being established, and students interacted well at the retreat. About 30 students are from Dunbar and they form a rather cohesive nucleus. On a few occasions students coming from other schools made comments about Dunbar students that were resented. Overall there are no major problems.

10) What are the general opinions and impressions about the program?

General opinions were quite positive. The program is doing as well as or better than expected. Teachers presented some minor problems. Transportation is one, and students often come late. Though cooperative the building administration does not appear very well organized and sometimes frustrates teachers. As an example, one had students removed from class for an assembly without warning for three days in a row. The engineering lab arrangements leave much to be desired. Two teachers voiced doubts about the appropriateness of extensive field trips so early in the year. Students do not know enough to appreciate them. One teacher felt that time spent on chaperoning these field trips was time out of instruction and planning. Another teacher suggested that extra planning time be given during the summer.

Overall impressions from both schools were quite positive. The programs have started well, and they are expected to improve with time. Each program has lost about four students and has two students who may be deficient enough to be removed. Dunbar teachers voiced more minor problems, and an attempt should be made do deal with them. Also, it seems that non-magnet teachers have created few if any problems. It is recommended that assessment of non-magnet teacher impressions be postponed until the program has been in operation for a year and they are better acquainted with it.

AN INTERVIEW AT THE DUNBAR MIDDLE SCHOOL PILOT MAGNET PROGRAM

Within the framework of interviews carried out at the high school level, an effort was made to assess the impressions of the two magnet teachers at Dunbar Middle School.

The program in Dunbar Middle is new and started three weeks into the school year. According to the teachers interviewed, it is too new to be meaningfully discussed. Curriculum for communications courses is still being developed. Students are very excited about it and particularly about the computers. They were building their own cameras when interviews were going on. Attendance is high and students come early to school to work on their projects or leave after hours. The building administration has been very supportive and cooperative.

Magnet Student Survey Results

Helen Abadzi

Research and Evaluation

May 1983

Summary

The survey undertaken to assess magnet student attitudes showed that most students considered the program challenging and teacher expectations high, had positive feelings about it, and did not often voice objections regarding busing distance. The most common complaint was about the large amount of homework given.

Magnet Student Survey Results

May 1983
Helen Abadzi
Research and Evaluation

WHY WAS THE SURVEY UNDERTAKEN?

The magnet program was in its second year of operation and many new students had been added to it coming from all parts of the town. The survey was undertaken in order to assess student attitudes, receive feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses of the program and compare responses from school to school.

HOW WAS THE SURVEY DEVELOPED AND ADMINISTERED?

The coordinators of the middle and high school programs met with the evaluator and outlined the areas in which they needed parent feedback. Twenty-five questions were formed on these issues. Non-demographic responses mostly consisted of positive, neutral, and negative alternatives. An open-ended question was also included which encouraged students to express their opinions and provide suggestions. Students were administered the questionnaire during a class where some time could be spared.

WHAT WERE THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS?

Dunbar Middle School respondents were 116 (33% of respondents), Poly High School respondents were 92 (28% of respondents) and Dunbar High School respondents were 121 (37% of respondents). Of these, 7% were Hispanic, 47% were Black and 44% were Anglo or Oriental students. Sixty-one percent of them had not been in the magnet program during the previous year. Males (55%) were slightly more than females (45%).

HOW DID STUDENTS RESPOND ON THE ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF THE SURVEY?

The program was rated as very challenging by 72% of the students with highest percentage coming from Poly High School (77%) and the lowest from Dunbar Middle School (68%). Only 11 students (3.4%) considered it not challenging enough, 7 of whom were in Dunbar Middle. Homework was considered by many to be excessive in the high schools (63%) though slightly fewer middle school students (45%) thought so. All other students but six thought it was about right. It was mostly (70% of students) considered to be of average difficulty, slightly more difficult at Dunbar High School, a little easier at Dunbar Middle School. Only four students found homework too easy. However, 10% rated it as very interesting, 48% quite interesting and 41% rated it as boring (see Table 1).

WHAT DID STUDENTS THINK ABOUT TEACHERS AND PROGRAM STAFF?

Of all students, 45% thought teachers were very interested in their academic progress and 49% thought they were somewhat interested. Only 18 students (6%), nine in Dunbar Middle, rated teachers as not interested in their progress. Also 77% of the students noted that magnet teachers expected much more than their previous teachers. Nine students (3%) indicated that they expected less. Sixty-eight percent rated teachers as doing about average work, 26% as doing superior work. Seventeen percent of the students, however, felt that teachers were not answering their questions while 60% considered them adequate on this point and 22% considered them superior. No significant differences were found in response frequencies of Black and Anglo students (see Table 1).

Most students (71%) felt that the coordinator was supportive and helpful while 29% did not. Anglo students tended to rate the coordinator's support higher than Blacks. The counselors were seen as very supportive (49%) or somewhat supportive (35%) by most students, although 16% did not think so. Negative ratings at Dunbar Middle School constituted 27% of responses; Dunbar Middle School does not have a magnet counselor. Students also considered advisors supportive (71%) but more than half (52%) reported not visiting their assigned advisor very often. Only 27% visited their advisor once a week as they were expected to.

WHAT DID STUDENTS THINK ABOUT THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

Most friendships during the current academic year (64%) were formed in class. Only 15% of the students reported forming most friendships away from school. Most students (84%) felt either somewhat or very much at comfort with non-magnet students. Percentages were slightly higher for Dunbar High School students and slightly lower for Poly students. Predictably, Blacks felt more at ease with non-magnet students than Anglos. Also, 82% of the students reported participating in extra-curricular activities.

Most students (64%) were not involved with conflict over inter-racial issues. Seventeen percent, however, were involved in conflicts once, and 19% were involved more than once. Dunbar Middle School tended to have such conflicts more often; 60% of the students had been involved in inter-racial conflicts to some extent.

In general, however, 46% of the students felt positive about the program and 43% were neutral. Only 11% reported feeling negative.

Similarly, the attitude of many students (35%) became more positive since the beginning of the year, while 38% of the students did not change attitudes. Twenty-seven percent reported that their attitude became more neutral (see Table 1).

WHAT ISSUES DID STUDENTS COMMENT ON?

About 80% of the students gave comments solicited at the end of the survey (see Tables 2 and 3). General remarks about the program were quite positive. With few exceptions students did not comment on transportation inconvenience. Several mentioned that they liked the magnet students, the atmosphere, the personal attention and field trips. A sample of comments is included in the Appendix.

The most common complaint was the amount of homework. Also common were comments on performance, grades, or personal habits of particular teachers. Some complaints, most at Dunbar Middle School, centered around the behavior of non-magnet students. A sample of comments is presented verbatim in the Appendix 1.

CONCLUSIONS?

Students' responses were quite positive. Many commented positively on the program and only two announced they were leaving. Dunbar High School appeared to have student body with the most positive attitude, while the Dunbar Middle school program received criticisms regarding teachers, disorganization, and some racially related conflicts. Although Black students tended to some extent to find academics more difficult, there were no pronounced ethnic differences in the survey. The program's strong point is the academic challenge it provides along with strong teacher expectations, personal attention

to students, and a bright academic future after high school.

RECOMMENDATIONS?

The program staff at each school should study the comments made by students. A suggestion given very frequently was that teachers should communicate with each other regarding tests and homework schedules so that homework would be evenly distributed throughout the week. Some changes, such as the above suggestion may help in reducing student homework pressure without lowering the quality of the program.

Table 1

MAGNET STUDENT OPINION SURVEY

Put an X in front of the answer of your choice

1. Grade _____ 29% 7th 7% 8th 35% 9th 17% 10th 11% 11th

2. Your school: 35% 1. Dunbar Middle 28% 2. Poly 37% 3. Dunbar High

3. Your race: 7% 1. Mexican-American 49% 2. Black 44% 3. Anglo/other

4. Your sex: 55% 1. Female 45% 2. Male

5. Were you at the same program last year? 39% 1. Yes 61% 2. No

6. How much time do you spend riding the bus to school?	DUNBAR MIDDLE		POLY		DUNBAR HIGH	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. about 45 minutes to 1 hour	39	13	29	9	27	9
2. about 30 to 45 minutes	28	9	26	8	21	7
3. about 15 to 30 minutes	19	6	22	7	25	8
4. less than 15 minutes or not at all	26	8	13	4	35	11
7. How challenging is the magnet program in relationship to the program you were in last year?						
1. much more challenging	77	24	68	21	86	27
2. about the same	28	9	19	6	32	10
3. much less challenging	8	3	1	.3	2	.6
8. In general, how much are teachers interested in your academic progress?						
1. very much interested	57	18	33	10	57	18
2. somewhat interested	49	15	52	16	58	18
3. they don't care	9	3	4	1	5	2
9. How difficult is homework?						
1. too difficult	19	6	34	10	38	12
2. about average	95	29	57	17	80	25
3. too easy	2	.6	0	0	2	.6
10. The amount of homework assigned is						
1. too much	52	16	60	18	76	23
2. about right	59	18	32	10	42	13
3. too little	5	2	0	0	1	.3

(continued)

	DUNBAR MIDDLE		POLY		DUNBAR HIGH	
11. In general, homework is	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
_____1. quite interesting	10	3	11	3	13	4
_____2. somewhat interesting	61	19	38	12	59	18
_____3. pretty boring	44	14	42	13	49	15
12. How much do your magnet teachers expect of you in comparison with previous teachers?						
_____1. much more	91	28	69	21	93	28
_____2. about the same	21	6	20	6	25	8
_____3. much less	3	.9	3	.9	3	.9
13. Do your teachers do a good job in the classroom?						
_____1. better than average	32	10	20	6	31	10
_____2. about average	74	23	63	19	83	26
_____3. worse than average	8	3	8	3	5	2
14. How has your attitude changed since the beginning of the school year?						
_____1. become more positive	51	16	30	9	34	10
_____2. remained about the same	45	14	30	9	49	15
_____3. become more negative	18	6	31	10	38	12
15. How do you feel about the program in general?						
_____1. pretty positive	62	19	36	11	53	16
_____2. neutral	41	13	42	13	57	17
_____3. rather negative	14	4	14	4	11	3
16. Do yout teachers answer your questions?						
_____1. always	22	7	17	5	32	10
_____2. sometimes	73	23	60	19	62	19
_____3. not often enough	20	6	14	4	24	7
17. How comfortable do you feel among the non-magnet students of your school?						
_____1. very comfortable	44	14	31	10	49	15
_____2. rather comfortable	52	16	42	13	57	17
_____3. not very comfortable	18	6	19	6	15	5

MAGNET STUDENT OPINION SURVEY

(continued)

	DUNBAR MIDDLE		POLY		DUNBAR HIGH	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18. How much do you participate in the extra-curricular activities of the school?						
_____1. a lot	35	11	27	8	51	16
_____2. a little	60	18	48	15	46	14
_____3. don't participate	21	6	17	5	21	6
19. Where did you form your closest friendships this year?						
_____1. in class	83	26	56	17	67	21
_____2. in extra-curricular activities	7	2	5	2	19	6
_____3. on the bus	3	.9	5	2	8	3
_____4. away from school	16	5	16	5	16	5
_____5. no close friendships formed this year	4	1	7	2	9	3
20. Have you been involved in conflicts regarding inter-racial issues in the magnet school?						
_____1. yes, more than once	37	11	15	5	8	3
_____2. yes, once	32	10	13	4	11	3
_____3. no	47	15	62	19	99	31
21. How much help and support do you get from your co-ordinator?						
_____1. a lot	53	17	22	7	24	8
_____2. some	36	11	35	11	59	18
_____3. almost none	26	8	34	11	32	10
22. How much help and support do you get from the magnet counselor?						
_____1. a lot	43	13	46	14	69	22
_____2. some	42	13	34	11	37	12
_____3. almost none	27	8	11	3	12	4
23. How often do you visit your assigned advisor?						
_____1. about once a week	18	6	30	9	38	12
_____2. about every other week	20	6	16	5	32	10
_____3. hardly at all	75	23	45	14	48	15
24. How much support do you get from your own advisor?						
_____1. a lot	27	9	37	12	51	16
_____2. some	40	13	30	10	39	12
_____3. almost none	43	14	22	7	28	9

OPTIONAL COMMENTS

25. What are the things you like and dislike about the program? What improvements do you suggest?

Your campus_____

Table 2

STUDENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

	Dunbar Middle		Poly		Dunbar High	
	Liked/ positive	Disliked/ improve	Liked/ positive	Disliked/ improve	Liked	Disliked
General remarks	11	5	17	3	16	1
Counselor performance			1	1		1
Comments on teachers	1	22	10	15	6	7
Distance transportation convenience		2		1		8
School location		3	1	4		
Amount of homework		10	1	22		24
Teacher explanations in class	6	3		3		11
Personal attention and contact	1	1		1		2
Social life and atmosphere	3	1	6	3	12	
Number of classrooms		1			2	
Class size		3		2		
Contacts with non-magnet students		4		2		
Advisory system	1	1	3		1	
Coordinator performance		4	2	1		
Number of students commenting:	94 of 112		77 of 91		86 of 118	

Table 3
Specific Comments

Comments specific to Dunbar Middle School:

More electives	1
Separate P.E. from non-magnet	3
More equuipment	7
Use entire second floor	2
Computer classes too crowsed	3
Promises not kept	3
Favoritism (toward whites)	7
Racial conflicts	10
Cafeteria interaction problems	1
More parties, field trips, extra-curricular activities	8
Field trips good	1
Access to locker at all times	4
Loose discipline in halls	1
Grades are hard to get	1
Create advanced classes, progress at faster rate	3
Teachers should coordinate homework	3
Disliked doing science fair project	1
Disorganization	4
Too much segregation from regular students	10
Too many slow students in program	3
Make telephone directory	1
Have a theater class	1
Classes are good	4
More girls	3

Comments specific to Poly High School:

Lunch hour changes	5
Accurate progress reports	1
Classes are boring	1
Computer courses are good	4
Teachers pick on certain students	5
(One teacher needs to get serious, stop joking)	7
Get better teachers	3
Students who don't meet standards should no be in	4
More extra-curricular activities	6
Paschal Assembler should be taught	1
Not enough girls	2
Lack of communication with greater Poly students	1
Recruitment promises not kept	4
More good looking guys	1
Trips are good	11
Have a student senate meet with administrators	1
Get paid for pre-internship program	1
Negative student attitude	5
Teachers should coordinate homework	6

(cont.)

Specific Comments
(continued)

Comments specific to Dunbar High:

Dismiss students who don't belong to program	1
Teachers should coordinate and schedule homework	4
Good racial relations	1
Favoritism towards students	4
Offer classes for advanced students	2
Plan more activities with regular students	2
Grades given are too low	1
More field trips	9
Day too long	3
Change tardy policies	1
More extra-curricular activities	4
Too little planning	1
Computer courses are good	3
Computer science should not be required	1
Teachers talk about personal issues	1
Give make-ups when most students fail a test	1
More freedom in class selection	3
Teachers don't care	6
Like field trips	4
Recruitment promises not kept	2
Boring classes	6
Engineering lab should be given in later years	3

Appendix

"Comments"

Comments from Dunbar High:

"When I look at the regular program, I wouldn't change schools for the world. But sometimes I get discouraged. I like the magnet program a lot. I like the students I have even notice how good the blacks get along with the white students. Last year, we talked, but we didn't mingle together. This year we understand each other's jokes and humor. What makes me feel low about the magnet program, when I walk home from the bus stop, I see the regular students. They have no books at all. I have three to four books plus a band instrument. But I'm not complaining."

"I do wish the teachers make their classes enjoyable and not boring. I also wish they make homework interesting. The bus routes should be shorter. I get tired of riding on the bus for an hour and ten minutes."

"In my personal opinion I feel that this program is not for me, but for your benifit I shall take an outside look. One class that should be moved maybe into our 10th grade year is E. Lab. This class is hard to understand and is very hard to pass. The teacher is not really all that great, but we must take in to mind it is her first year teaching. Many of classes are alright, but do to my busy days I am having trouble getting all my homework done. For some people I thank this program is perfect, but for others it can be a nightmare."

"What I like most about the program is the students. Here most students don't think they are any better than the other students. I don't have a favorite class but I like some of the teachers a little."

"I think I like everything here except the big amounts of homework. I feel they should be cut down a little, because alot of students I know have things that go on outside of school (church, programs at different places, etc.) I for one have a lot church programs in which I usually come home late and don't have enough time to do my homework."

Comments from Dunbar Middle:

"I don't like the some of teachers."

"I feel there is just a tiny bit more work to be done but otherwise I think it is the best."

"Everything is fine."

"I like Comm. I want to take it for a full year next year. I want a theater and Drama class."

"Improvements - Too disorganized.
More teachers in halls for stopping fights.
More calm teachers, Science is no fun now.
Longer passing periods, not enough time to get to class and we should be able to get in our locker when we want to not just certain times.
There is so many broken promises.
Crowded rooms and have alot more complaints."

"One of the problems I have had is with the non-magnet students in the school they are frequently making comments...However I think Mrs. Shelton should spend more time explaining to the students some of the concepts that we aquire in that class...However I really enjoy the program I enjoy being challenged to my ability even though I miss, somewhat, getting the "easy A's" as I used to. But I still get A's I just have to work harder for them I truly think this program is a rewarding experience that will benefit me all through my education."

"I suggest more fieldtrips. (educational and fun) Don't separate us from non-magnet like when we have skating parties. C.E.R. explain lesson better over all the program has been very good this year."

"I disliked working out of the same books as 7th graders, not having enough materials (especially in stad. prod.), and not having more people my own age in the program...I liked the chance to get hands-on training in C.E.L. & Stud. Prod...Next year teachers should coordinate projects and homework assignments better."

Comments from Poly:

"I like the teachers, the subjects, the advisors, the people, the friends, the fun everything. Improvements make contests out of academic goals beauty contest, laugh contest etc."

"In my opinion we are having entirely too much homework. I agree that we might need it but not so much of it. The projects all seem to be due at the same time which puts a burden on us. The test fall on the same day so even if we know the material its pretty hard to have all the facts down. The teacher attitudes and way of teaching seems to have changed since last year. There so hung up in there personal life that they're half teaching us. THEY ARE A BIT NOSEY...I would like to welcome Mr. Short, Mrs. Hadley and Mrs. Devine...Farewell Mrs. Clark."

"I like just about everything but I wished there were more partys to get to know everyone better."

"I like the school, some of the students & teachers. I dislike the actions of students & teachers. Students should try to do better than they are & try to give Poly a good name."

"A few of the things I dislike is the way my bus route is, but it works I guess. I don't like some of the attitudes on the buses. There is too much homework anymore. By the time I get home it 5:00 to 5:30 then some homework 6:00 to 6:30, then dinner 7:00 to 7:30, then more homework 8:00 to 8:30 there's no time to relax. Then time for the shower then bed (9:00 to 10:00). I don't like a few people's attitudes in the magnet program I guess thats all to say without mentioning names!"

"I like the classes and head start we are given over other schools... I dislike the lack of activity of the magnet program & lack of interest & excitement in teachers, ect...I hope the magnet program can function as a school by itself without assistance of greater Poly."

"The teachers expect entirely too much from us. They seem to forget the fact that we have seven classes a day. I'm also disappointed in the fact that we didn't get to take some of the classes that were on the schedule, Why "emphasize" law if we only have 2 semesters of it?! ie - B. Law III, & Bus. Communications. I do hope that all that's been promised about the internships will be realized. Let me say that I am pleased with our counselor. She is doing an excellent job in providing support for the students. May we all try to do the same!"

Magnet Parent Survey

April 1983

Helen Abadzi

Research and Evaluation

A survey mailed to parents of magnet students revealed that magnet parents have a quite positive attitude regarding the magnet school. They see the program as challenging with an appropriate amount of homework, and its staff members are very competent and helpful. They would like to see, however, a greater amount of parent-school communication and wish their children did not have to travel so far every day.

Magnet Parent Survey Results

April 1983
Helen Abadzi

Department of Research/Evaluation

WHY WAS THE SURVEY UNDERTAKEN?

The survey was undertaken in order to assess parent attitudes and receive feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses of the program. The magnet program was in its second year of operation and many new students had been added to it coming from all parts of the town.

HOW WAS THE SURVEY DEVELOPED AND ADMINISTERED?

The coordinators of the middle and high school programs met with the evaluator and outlined the areas in which they needed parent feedback. Twenty-five questions were formed on these issues which would be comprehensible to parents. Non-demographic responses mostly consisted of positive, neutral, negative and "not enough information" alternatives. An open-ended question was also included which encouraged parents to express their opinions and provide suggestions. The questionnaire was mailed to all middle and high school magnet parents. They were asked to return the anonymous responses in postage-paid envelopes to the Department of Research/Evaluation.

WHAT WERE THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS?

Approximately 40% of the parents responded from each one of the three schools. Fifty-one parents responded from Dunbar Middle, 42 from Poly, and 53 from Dunbar High, bringing the total responses to 146 out of 360 who received them. Of the respondents, 10% were Hispanic, 42% were Black, 66% were Anglo, and 4% were Orientals. Since 53% of the magnet student population is Black, Blacks were under-represented in the returns while Anglos (39%) were

over-represented. The children of 100 respondents were in the program for the first year. Parents of females were slightly more (53%) than parents of males, which reflected the student sex ratio. Parent responses are given in Table 1.

HOW DID PARENTS RESPOND ON THE ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF THE SURVEY?

Seventy percent of all respondents agreed that the program met their child's academic needs very well and 28% agreed that it met their needs to some extent. Only two parents responded that it did not meet their children's needs. The percentage of positive responses was highest for Poly High School (76%) and lowest for Dunbar (64%). Sixty-four percent of parents (69% for Poly, 57% for Dunbar Middle) agreed that the program was very challenging while 8% disagreed (11% for Dunbar Middle). Black and Hispanic parents were the most positive about the academic aspects of the program.

Homework was seen as being excessive by a few parents (19%) although 73% thought it was about right. Eleven parents (8%), seven at Dunbar Middle, thought homework was too little. The vast majority (89%) thought that it was average in difficulty. Blacks, however, tended to find homework excessive as well as more difficult.

It was found that most students (56%) spend one to two hours on homework each evening, 20% less than 1 hour, and 24% more than two hours. Black students tended to study somewhat longer. (See Table 1)

WHAT DID PARENTS THINK ABOUT THE STAFF AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT?

Most parents (62%) reported being quite pleased with teacher performance, and only four parents reported being displeased. Although a large proportion of parents (43%) had never requested a conference with a teacher, all parents but five agreed that

teachers were available. Also many parents were not familiar with the student advisory system but of those who were (54%) all but seven were pleased with it. It was noted in particular that 62% of the Dunbar Middle School repondents did not know enough about the advisory system. Also, most parents (65%) considered themselves adequately informed regarding student progress but substantial numbers (16%) did not.

Coordinators got high marks, as well, (53% of the parents were very pleased) particularly at Dunbar High and Poly. Seven parents voiced concerns regarding the availability of Dunbar Middle's coordination services. Counseling services were also rated highly with only seven disapprovals. Five were directed at Dunbar Middle which does not have a magnet counselor and either applied to the regular school counselors or underscored this need. The director's leadership was also rated as very positive by 57% of the people with only five parents disapproving. Large numbers of parents did not have enough information to rate the principals (29%) and vice orincipals (49%). Those who did mostly agreed that they were very pleased.

Response patterns for black and white parents differed somewhat. They considered themselves adequately informed about children's progress more often, but they were less likely to request teacher conferences. They also tended to have inadequate information about the coordinator and the director though they were more familiar with the counselor and the school administrators.

WHAT DID PARENTS THINK ABOUT THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

They mostly felt that children were going to school in a safe environment (69%) though 24% were undecided and 11 parents felt the environment was unsafe. Some parents later verbalized that they did not want children participating in evening activities at Poly in

particular. Slightly more Anglos than other students felt unsafe. There were three instances of severe racially-related conflict reported to parents, although 32 (23%) other parents reported minor conflict, 76% of the parents reported no such incidents. Minor conflict was more frequently reported (81% vs. 19%) by Anglo parents of students in their first year at a magnet school.

Distance between the school and home is a problem, but the transportation service was rated positively by most parents (52%) while it rated negatively by 13% of them. Anglo parents of middle school students were less pleased than Black parents, whose children used buses to a lesser extent. More than half the parents (57%) reported that their child was very pleased with the program, particularly at Dunbar Middle School. Ten percent (14 parents) said their child was not pleased, of which only two were at Poly High School. Anglo students reported to their parents that they were pleased by the program more often than Black students.

In general, parent opinions regarding the program remained the same since the beginning of the academic year (46%), though a substantial percentage (41%) acquired a more positive opinion. Twenty parents became more negative, particularly at Dunbar Middle (where 12 out of 20 belonged). The opinion of Blacks tended to remain more stable. Parents of newcomer students tended to indicate that their opinions had become more positive since the beginning of the academic year.

WHAT ISSUES DID PARENTS COMMENT ON?

More than half of the parents gave comments at the end of the survey. General remarks, given in Table 2, were mostly positive, congratulating the staff and expressing support for the program. (A sample of comments is presented verbatim in the Appendix.) Some thanked the administration for the opportunity to express their views.

The personal attention given to students got some positive comments. The complaints voiced most often had to do with the inconvenience of transportation and school location. Some parents would like to see magnet programs located in racially neutral schools.

Suggestions were solicited and many parents gave them. They are listed on Table 3.

CONCLUSIONS?

Parent reponses were quite positive. Some problems were voiced regarding Dunbar Middle School Magnet teachers, academic programs, coordinator availability, and conflict with regular students. They must be seen in light of the fact that there is no counselor at Dunbar Middle to help the coordinator and that students are younger and parents probably seemed to show concern regarding more details of their academic and social aspects of school.

Dunbar High School appeared to have the most challenging program and Poly High the most problem-free operation as viewed by parents, Poly High School attracted the fewest negative comments, although some parents expressed concern about the neighborhood. Racially-related incidents, though slightly more frequent at Dunbar Middle, were few everywhere. Parents were appreciative, and one expressed regret that such good education had to become available only for the sake of integration.

RECOMMENDATIONS?

Coordinators should communicate more with parents regarding student progress. Parents, particularly Black, must be encouraged to get in touch with the school and participate in activities. A counselor should be hired for the Dunbar Middle program.

Table I

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

MAGNET SCHOOL

March 1983

PARENT OPINION SURVEY

	Dunbar Middle		Poly		Dunbar High	
1. Grade: _____	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2. Your child's school: Returns:	51	42	42	39	53	40
_____1. Dunbar Out of	123		107		132	
_____2. Poly						
3. Your child's race:						
_____1. Hispanic	3	6%	3	7%	8	15%
_____2. Black	18	35%	18	43%	26	49%
_____3. Anglo	28	55%	20	48%	18	34%
_____4. Oriental	2	4%	1	2%	1	2%
4. Your child's sex:						
_____1. Male	23	43%	17	40%	30	57%
_____2. Female	30	57%	25	60%	23	43%
5. Did your child attend this magnet school last year?						
_____1. Yes	7	13%	16	38%	24	46%
_____2. No	46	87%	26	62%	28	54%
6. Are you pleased with the bus transportation to and from the magnet school?						
_____1. Yes	25	47%	27	64%	25	47%
_____2. So-so	15	28%	8	19%	10	19%
_____3. No	9	17%	4	10%	6	11%
_____4. Child does not ride the bus	4	8%	3	7%	12	23%
7. Does the program meet your child's academic needs?						
_____1. Very much	34	64%	32	76%	38	73%
_____2. Somewhat	18	34%	9	21%	14	27%
_____3. Not at all	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
8. Is your child challenged to his/her potential?						
_____1. Definitely yes	30	57%	29	69%	35	66%
_____2. So-so	17	32%	11	26%	14	26%
_____3. Not really	6	11%	2	5%	4	8%
9. Has your child ever mentioned having become involved in conflict over inter-racial issues on campus?						
_____1. Yes, severe conflict	2	4%	1	2%	0	0
_____2. Yes, minor conflict	17	32%	5	12%	10	19%
_____3. No	34	64%	36	86%	43	81%
10. What do you think about the amount of homework?						
_____1. It is too much	9	18%	10	24%	9	17%
_____2. It is about right	35	69%	32	76%	39	75%
_____3. It is too little	7	14%	0	0	4	8%

MAGNET SCHOOL

PARENT OPINION SURVEY
(continued)

	Dunbar Middle		Poly		Dunbar High	
11. What do you think about the difficulty of homework?	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
_____1. It is too difficult	5	9%	2	5%	4	8%
_____2. It is about right	45	85%	39	95%	46	89%
_____3. It is too easy	30	6%	0	0%	2	4%
12. On the average, how much time does your child spend on homework each evening?						
_____1. Less than 1 hour	12	23%	7	17%	11	21%
_____2. 1-2 hours	32	62%	24	57%	26	49%
_____3. More than 2 hours	8	15%	11	26%	16	30%
13. To your knowledge, how pleased is your child with the program?						
_____1. Quite pleased	32	61%	25	60%	27	52%
_____2. Rather neutral	14	26%	15	36%	20	39%
_____3. Rather negative	7	13%	2	5%	5	10%
14. Have you been informed adequately concerning your child's progress at school?						
_____1. Yes	31	60%	25	60%	39	74%
_____2. Undecided	12	23%	10	24%	6	11%
_____3. No	9	17%	7	17%	8	15%
15. To your experience are you pleased with the performance of the teaching staff?						
_____1. Quite pleased	28	53%	30	73%	33	62%
_____2. So-so	24	45%	10	24%	18	34%
_____3. No	1	2%	1	2%	2	4%
16. Are the magnet teachers available for conferences (either personal or by phone)?						
_____1. Mostly yes	29	55%	23	56%	26	50%
_____2. Mostly no	3	6%	0	0	2	4%
_____3. Never had to request a conference	21	40%	18	44%	24	46%
17. Are you pleased with the teacher-student advisory system?						
_____1. Mostly yes	16	30%	23	58%	29	55%
_____2. Mostly no	4	8%	1	3%	2	4%
_____3. I do not have enough information about it	33	62%	16	40%	22	42%
18. Are you pleased with the supervision of the magnet program by the co-ordinator?						
_____1. Very much	25	47%	27	68%	32	60%
_____2. Somewhat	11	21%	6	15%	11	21%
_____3. Not at all	7	13%	1	3%	1	2%
_____4. I do not have enough information	10	19%	6	15%	9	17%

MAGNET SCHOOL

PARENT OPINION SURVEY
(continued)

	Dunbar Middle		Poly		Dunbar High	
19. Are you pleased with the counseling services of the magnet program?	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
_____1. Very much	19	36%	22	55%	28	53%
_____2. Somewhat	6	11%	8	20%	11	21%
_____3. Not at all	5	9%	0	0	2	4
_____4. I do not have enough information	23	43%	10	25%	12	23%
20. Are you pleased with the director's leadership of the program?						
_____1. Very much	31	60%	23	56%	29	55%
_____2. Somewhat	12	23%	4	10%	7	13%
_____3. Not at all	0	0	3	7%	2	4%
_____4. I do not have enough information	9	17%	11	27%	15	28%
21. Are you pleased with the school principal's leadership?						
_____1. Very much	24	45%	16	37%	23	43%
_____2. Somewhat	13	25%	7	17%	12	23%
_____3. Not at all	4	8%	3	7%	3	6%
_____4. I do not have enough information	12	23%	15	37%	15	28%
22. Are you pleased with the vice-principal's supervision?						
_____1. Very much	14	26%	9	22%	18	34%
_____2. Somewhat	11	21%	10	24%	9	2%
_____3. Not at all	2	4%	1	2%	1	2%
_____4. I do not have enough information	26	49%	21	51%	25	47%
23. Do you feel that your child is going to school in a safe environment?						
_____1. Yes	37	70%	27	66%	37	70%
_____2. Undecided	13	25%	10	24%	12	23%
_____3. No	3	6%	4	10%	4	8%
24. Are your child's current friends from the magnet program?						
_____1. Most are	34	64%	27	66%	27	51%
_____2. Some are	15	28%	12	29%	21	40%
_____3. Very few are	4	8%	2	5%	5	10%
25. Has your opinion of the program changed since the beginning of school?						
_____1. Yes, it has become more positive	17	32%	21	51%	22	42%
_____2. It has remained the same	24	45%	15	37%	28	53%
_____3. Yes, it has become more negative	12	23%	5	12%	3	6%

MAGNET PARENT OPINION SHEET

(continued)

OPTIONAL COMMENTS

26. What are the things you like and dislike about the program? What improvements do you suggest?

Child's campus_____

Table 2

PARENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

	Dunbar Middle		Poly		Dunbar High	
	Liked/ positive	Disliked/ improve	Liked/ positive	Disliked/ improve	Liked	Disliked
General remarks	15	2	14	1	15	0
Comments on program management	2	3	2	1	1	1
Comments on teachers	3	6	4	4	1	2
Distance, transportation convenience	0	8	1	4	0	6
School location	1	1	0	4	0	5
Amount of homework	0	1	2	1	2	2
Performance feedback to parents	0	5	0	1	0	2
Clarity of course objectives	0	1	0	0	0	2
Personal attention and contact	1	0	2	0	1	0
Social life and atmosphere	2	1	1	0	2	1
Number of classrooms	0	0	0	1	0	1
Class size	1	0	1	0	2	0
Discipline of non-magnet students	0	2	0	1	0	0
Number of parents commenting	38		30		29	

Table 3

Comments Specific to Dunbar Middle School

	No. Responded
Food, cafeteria problems	1
Lower academic standards than expected	3
Confusion, disorganization	3
Need more honors programs	1
P.E. courses not good	1
Develop parent telephone directory	1
Bad school photographer	1
Computer class complaints	3
Teach typing before computer	1
Field trips cancelled	3
Lack of materials	3
Students are there only for integration	3
Better coordination between projects & homework	1
Racially related incidents	4
More sports for girls	1
Coordinator does not have enough time	3
SAT and honors are good	1
Complaints about principal	4

Comments Specific to Dunbar High School

Day too long	1
Racial inequality occurences	3
Few opportunities for parental involvement	2
Students will get good jobs	2
Good exposure through field trips	1

Comments specific to Poly High School

Student safety, particularly at night activities	3
Need more publicity	1
Need business community help	1
Need foreign language	1
Computer courses are good	1
Scheduling inflexibility	1
Mention "magnet" on diplomas	1
Larger program office	1
Set up part-time jobs	1
Move to separate building	1
Get involved in science, history & computer fairs	1

APPENDIX

A sample of comments from Dunbar Middle School:

What are the things you like and dislike about the program? What improvements do you suggest?

"The busing program is very bad. There is too much pressure placed on the kids."

"I am not informed at an early date on my child's progress. I think that these kids are all capable of maintaining grades above a "C", and parents should be informed when there is a problem with the child."

"Lack of support from principal. Put smaller programs in more schools, so it won't be so limited...I thought my child would learn more this year and am not sure I won't to chance another year in this school for quality educations sake...Magnet kids seem to have to compete an awfully lot with regular kids and that doesn't seem right...We need a co-ordinator who will work on the problems of now, not next years, maby she needs an assistant...Lack of communication hurt this program most and still is to this day."

"My only dislike about the program is the amount of homework given. The information is given in great amounts and at a fast speed...I feel that my children are not grasping the information for they are forced to move ahead before learning the present lessons."

"No enough "hard" cirriculum - for example, most colleges still require at least two years of a foreign language, but Dunbar/Magnet offers no foreign language...Communications exposes the children to different printing and photography skills, but quite frankly, we want college prep courses."

"The program is well structured and challenging. I would suggest that in future projects for science, history, etc., fairs a little more guidancebe provided in the preparation/format desired for the project boards/displays. This information would be most helpful to the students in college and business...The FWISD has a good thing going in this program, maybe some spillover to the rest of the system will result. Everyone in the program should be congratulated."

"I think that this is an excellent program. The communication system between the teachingf staff and coordinator and the parents could be more dynamic. Then the parent group could contribute more to the needs of the program and thus further promotes the program quality."

"The magnet program is working out fine for us, however I have heard that some fights among the regular, non-magnet students are quite violent, and this makes me wonder if the magnet kids should attend school with the non-magnet ones...Due to the proposed neighborhood school program to avoid busing, will my child still be transported to school?"

"I feel the computer course is a great challenge, the communication class I like because of the exposure although it does not seem to be challenging, and I am pleased with the progress and growth I've seen within my child. I dislike the idea of the magnet students being on the top floor and regular students on the bottom level. The magnet classes should exist and will but I feel they should not be segregated without there being a reason."

A sample of comments from Poly High School parents:

"Just stay the course!"

"I do not dislike anything about the program. I think its great... Some thing I hear go on the campus (should not). I suggest better monitoring."

"Expand and offer program in all schools within the system."

"Co-ordinators and directors should be more organized concerning transportation to and from different activities...My child's grades have dropped at least one grade. I feel like this may be due to the large amount of homework that is given for evenings and weekends... Other than this I think the magnet program has been very successful."

"I feel magnet programs would work better in a magnet school, not within a school. I dislike conflict between magnet and greater body staff. Some times magnet students are treated different by some greater body staff, which rubs off on the greater body students."

"The homework is ;a little more than she need's, and the bus has such a early time for her to go to school, then she get's home late."

"I'm impressed with the academic exposure my daughter enjoys and shares with us. More importantly, congrats to the teachers for their rapport with these young people. They will carry this with them all their lives.!"

"I like the curriculum and the interest and enthusiasm of the teachers. I think weneed stronger more consistent discipline in classes. I think the alert for narcotics should be more firmly observed."

A sample of comments from Dunbar High School parents:

"I suggest that children be told as specifically as possible what the goals and objectives are for each class...A simple syllabus should include information on the teachers' grading system."

"I suggest more interschool participation by students and parents. Get more of the parents involved in the program."

"My child was happy at the beginning of the school year and was all for going to school there. I like the program and I believe it's a great opportunity for any student to attend. However, I thought that there would be more concern by teachers and counselors when an average student is having trouble adjusting or has just giving up - not once has a tutor been recommended - to my knowledge parents have only once been notified. I'm truly concerned about my child."

"One of the things I like about the program is it gives my Son a chance for a better education. The thing I do not like is the distance between our house and the school...I can not think of any improvements that should be made at this time."

"I am pleased with the policy of plenty of school work (and home work) to attain the goal which this program requires."

"I'm very please with the whole program."

"I like the program very much, but I thank the child is given to much homework."

"The teachers are partial to the white students. What the whites get away with our (Black) students get an infraction."